

October 8, 2007

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Dear Canvassing Board Members:

In accordance with RCW 29A.04.570, the State Election Certification and Training Program conducted a comprehensive review of election procedures in King County during the 2006 General Election.

The RCW also requires a follow-up visit prior to the next Primary or General Election to verify the County has taken the steps necessary to correct the changes recommended in the review report.

The following recommendations were discussed during my follow-up visit:

1. **Candidate Filing** *While a form may be provided for this purpose, King County should accept any withdrawal request signed by the candidate. Notarization or a specific form should not be required.*

Follow Up: King County now accepts candidate withdrawals in alternate formats.

2. **Security at the TEA (Temporary Elections Annex)** *The security procedures implemented by King County at the TEA provide excellent security. These recommendations will add to what they already have in place:*
 - *The security camera recordings are stored on the DVR for 25-30 days. Ballots are in the TEA for up to 45 days. The security camera records should be kept for the entire time that ballots are in the TEA. These records should be placed on a DVD and kept for the same amount of time required for other election documentation.*
 - *The use of plastic seals and logs is the best method for sealing boxes with ballots. All boxes used for storing or transporting ballots should be punched to allow use of plastic seals and the use of paper seals should be discontinued.*
 - *The security measures in place visually record who goes in and out of the security cages and the Sheriff Deputies watch for unauthorized access. Those authorized to work on a box of ballots record the seal numbers. These measures do not readily show if a person has had unauthorized access to a specific box of ballots.*

A record of the seal number(s) should accompany sealed boxes of ballots. As the seals are broken the record should be checked that the seal is the same one applied earlier. This could be done by compiling the seal numbers of a group of boxes on a single log with the names of those sealing the boxes or by placing the seal number on a sheet with the name of those sealing the box inside the sealed box.

Follow Up: A company has been located that has a system that will allow for recording the video images for the entire span of ballot processing. The new system will be installed in their new facility. Electronic security in the new facility will be greatly enhanced in several areas, including more accessible areas for observation, more surveillance cameras, and monitors for observing electronic adjudication and two point authentication for access to secure areas. Emphasis has been increased on the use of numbered seals in all phases of ballot processing.

3. Absentee Ballots Deposited at Polling Places

A single blue transport bag is not adequate to transport absentee ballots from larger polling places. Additional bags or larger bags should be provided.

Poll workers should be trained on the correct procedure to be followed when absentee ballots are delivered after 8:00 p.m.

The number of absentee ballots accepted at the polls should be listed on the ballot accountability sheet. An absentee ballot transmittal slip included with the bag containing the absentee ballot is useful and that practice should continue. Recording the number of absentees on the ballot accountability sheet serves as the official record of the number of absentees transported should something happen to the transmittal slip or the blue bag.

Follow Up: Additional absentee transport bags and more substantial seals have been provided for the poll sites. New training has been implemented that emphasizes the correct procedure for absentee ballots and accountability sheets.

4. Provisional Ballots *The red bags are not secure as they are not secured with a numbered seal on Election Day. Each poll site should have a secure container for voted provisional ballots.*

Follow Up: The red bags are adequate for transporting provisional ballots. More training has been added for poll workers regarding security of provisional ballots at the polls.

5. Polling Place Closing Procedures *King County has provided very good training for poll workers in the past; however, it is an ongoing problem to properly educate poll workers. Training should emphasize the correct procedure for closing the polls, with special attention given to the process of making unvoted ballots unusable and secure prior to opening the ballot box. Even though Accuvote printouts include the number of ballots counted, the Revised Code of Washington requires a physical count of the actual ballots compared to the actual number of signatures in the poll book.*

As of the publication of this report, King County has revised their closing procedures and added more emphasis to this area in their poll worker training.

Follow Up: Training has been revised to emphasize these areas.

6. **Deposit Drop Sites** *King County Elections must find a way to keep the memory cards securely sealed at all times. Memory cards could remain securely sealed in the Accuvotes until arriving at the TEA.*

If neither of those options is used, the depot locations must be staffed sufficiently to securely remove the cards for transportation, and the staff members must be instructed to immediately place the memory cards in a securely sealed container when removed from the Accuvotes. A log would then need to be used to document that the original Accuvote seal had not been tampered with, and to note the seal on the container that the cards went into. Memory cards must be treated with the same diligence and respect that physical voted ballots receive.

As of the publication of this report, King County reports that depot procedures have been changed to provide more security of the memory cards.

Follow Up: New procedures have been implemented at the drop sites. Staff is recording seal numbers with a barcode system. One person is designated to secure the memory cards.

7. **Polling Place Canvass** *It is correct to require that bags containing ballots should be sealed for transport from the poll site to the counting center. If the seal number at the counting center does not match the number indicated on the ballot transmittal, further investigation should be conducted to verify that the bags and the contents were not tampered with before going further in canvassing the materials.*

Follow Up: An investigative process takes place for mismatched seals.

In addition to the recommendations implemented by King County, additional security measures have been implemented. Logic and Accuracy Tests are conducted before and after ballot tabulation each day. Audit logs are exported to check for unusual activity. King County is in the process of adding hash code verification as well as requiring fingerprints and passwords for the GEMS ballot tabulation system.

Sherril Huff and her staff should be commended for their obvious dedication to the election process and their desire to improve an already excellent operation.

If you have any questions, please feel free to contact me at 360.902.4146 or shmoss@secstate.wa.gov.

Sincerely,

Sheryl Moss
Election Certification and Training Program Manager